



The executive director of Iowa Legal Aid and the director of the office of professional regulation have filed with the court a proposal to amend the student practice provisions of chapter 31 of the Iowa Court Rules. The general purpose of the proposal is to help provide legal services to low-income Iowans by expanding and clarifying the circumstances under which law students and law graduates awaiting the bar examination or examination results may engage in limited, supervised practice.

1. Iowa Court Rule 31.15(1)(c) would be amended to make clear that student practice may include transactional matters as well as matters pending in court.

2. A sentence would be added to Iowa Court Rule 31.15(2) to make clear that law students who have completed at least three semesters may represent clients in an administrative contested case proceeding, but need not have a licensed attorney present. The new sentence would make rule 31.15(2) consistent with rule 31.15(1)(c), which allows representation in court without a licensed attorney present.

3. Iowa Court Rule 31.15(3) would be amended to allow students to continue the same level of student practice after an educational program is completed, so long as the placement is substantially the same and the law school approves. This amendment would allow law students to continue to use and improve the skills developed in a law school class after the class is completed.

4. Iowa Court Rule 31.15(4) would be amended to make clear that law students may perform the same type of work for licensed lawyers that other non-lawyers, such as paralegals, are able to perform.

5. Iowa Court Rule 31.15(6) would be added to address permissible activity by law school graduates between the time of graduation and admission to the bar. In the switch to the multi-state bar exam, a window has opened up where graduates cannot practice, but could obtain practical experience before beginning employment as a lawyer. This amendment would permit practice on

behalf of specific governmental and approved legal aid organizations during this time, under the supervision of a licensed lawyer.

The supreme court seeks public comment on the proposed amendments to the student practice rule before taking further action on them. Copies of the proposed rule may be found at:

[http://www.iowacourts.gov/About the Courts/Supreme Court/Orders/index.asp](http://www.iowacourts.gov/About%20the%20Courts/Supreme%20Court/Orders/index.asp)

In addition, copies are available at the office of the Clerk of the Supreme Court.

Any interested organization, agency, or person may submit written comments. Comments about a proposed rule must refer to the specific rule number (for example, Rule 31.15(2)) and the specific numbered line or lines to which the comments are directed. Comments sent by email must be emailed to [rules.comments@iowacourts.gov](mailto:rules.comments@iowacourts.gov), must state "student practice" in the subject line of the email, and must be sent as an attachment to the email in Microsoft Word format. Instead of submission by email, comments may be delivered in person or mailed to the Clerk of the Supreme Court, 1111 East Court Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.

Any comments received may be posted on the Iowa Judicial Branch website.

**The deadline for submitting comments is 4:30 p.m. on March 10, 2014.**

Dated this 7th day of January, 2014.

The Supreme Court of Iowa

By Mark S. Cady  
Mark S. Cady, Chief Justice